

FOR 35 YEARS... THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-HERO!!

ACTION

DC
COMICS

IN THIS
ISSUE:

ACTION-PLUS WITH:

THE HUMAN TARGET!

20¢

NO. 429
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ACTION COMICS

LIFE - FILE of SUPERMAN alias CLARK KENT



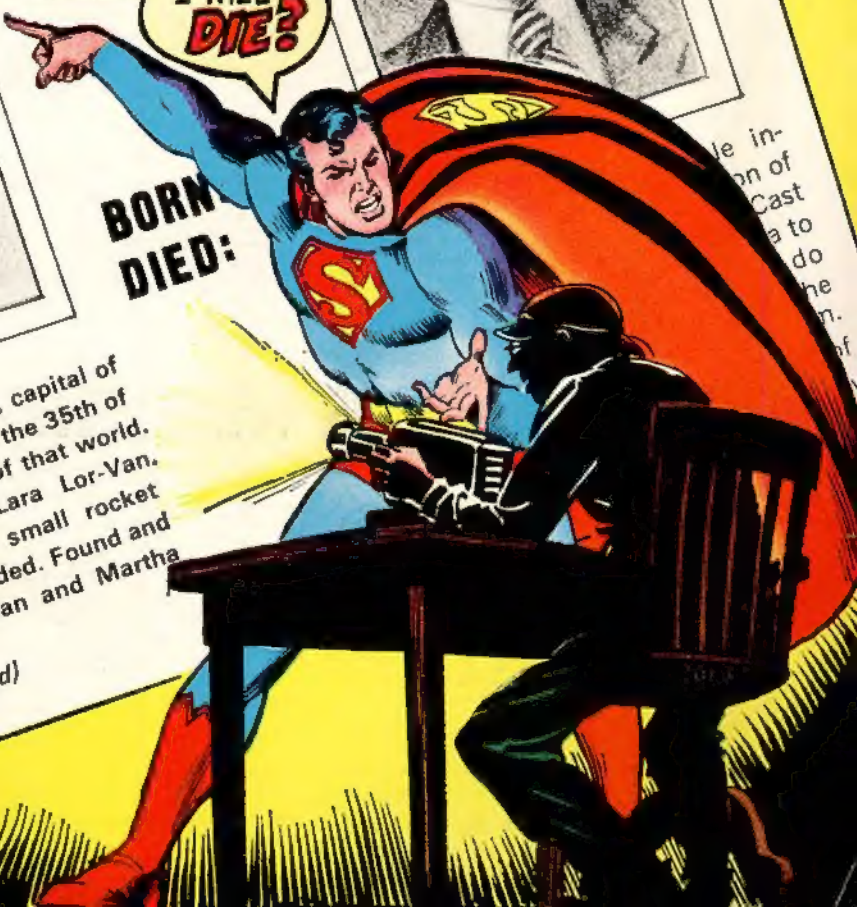
HOW CAN YOU KNOW
EVERYTHING ABOUT
ME... ALL MY **SECRETS**...
FROM THE DAY I WAS BORN
TO THE EXACT MOMENT
I WILL
DIE?



BORN:
DIED:

Born in Kryptonopolis, capital of the planet Krypton, on the 35th of Eorx, in the year 9,998 of that world. Son of Jor-El and Lara Lor-Van. Sent to Earth in a small rocket when Krypton exploded. Found and adopted by Jonathan and Martha Kent.

(continued)



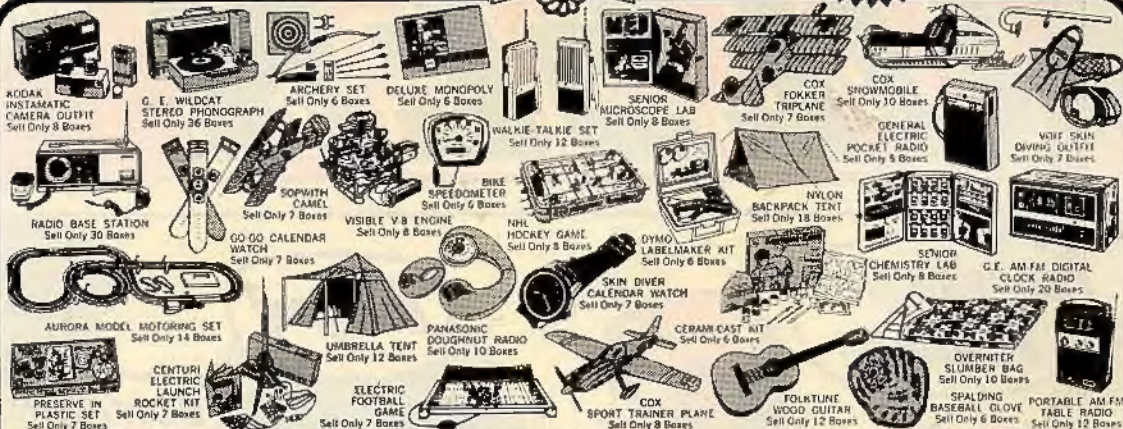
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Check coupon block if desired.

YOU CAN GET THESE and many, many other valuable prizes — or cash — simply by selling beautiful Olympic Imprinted Christmas Cards, ALL-OCCASION CARDS, GIFT WRAPS, STATIONERY AND GIFTS. Olympic offers more variety! The Olympic way is the IN way! Here's why...
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A GLORIOUS WHISTLE OF AIR...
A STREAK OF SCARLET AND SAPPHIRE...

HERALD THE START OF ANOTHER
ACTION-PACKED
SAGA OF

SUPERMAN

THE PLACE IS A VOLCANIC ISLE IN THE MID-PACIFIC, WHERE THE WORLD-RENNOWNED MAN OF STEEL IS...

...EXCAVATING THIS ANCIENT CITY BURIED BENEATH TONS OF MOLTEN LAVA!

WHAT WOULD TAKE ARCHEOLOGISTS YEARS TO DO EFFICIENTLY IS A CINCH WITH SUPER-POWERS!

FOLLOW THE WORLD'S GREATEST HERO FROM THIS TIME-FORGOTTEN PLACE... TO THE BARREN WASTES OF THE ARCTIC... AND TO THE TEEMING CITY OF METROPOLIS ON THE MYSTERY TRAIL OF...

"THE MAN WHO WROTE SUPERMAN'S OBITUARY!"

STORY BY:
ELLIOT MAGGIN

ART BY:
**CURT SWAN &
BOB OKSNER**

EDITED BY:
JULIUS SCHWARTZ

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IT IS A
FABULOUS
CITY OF
JEWELS
THAT LIES
BENEATH THE
MOUNTAIN,
AND AS
ARMS OF
STEEL DIG
AND SCRAPE
AT LAYERS
OF MOLTEN
DUST...

THIS CITY MAY
HOLD KNOWLEDGE
AND TREASURES
OF ART BEYOND ANY-
ONE'S WILDEST DREAMS!

THE METROPOLIS
MUSEUM OF ART
WOULD GIVE PLENTY
FOR AN HOUR'S
TREASURE-HUNT
THROUGH HERE...

...BUT FOR THE
PRESENT, THIS
ANCIENT, ISOLATED
CITY WILL BE
SAFE FROM
"COLLECTORS"...

-- SAFER THAN
CLARK KENT
WILL BE IF HE
DOESN'T SHOW
UP AT WORK
PRETTY SOON!

AT THE SPEED
OF A BEAM
OF LIGHT, THE
ACTION ACE
CUTS ACROSS
AN OCEAN...
A CONTINENT...
AND A
CORRIDOR
OF THE
GALAXY
BUILDING...

WHEW!
SURE IS
DRAFTY
HERE!

...WHERE, IN
THE NEXT FEW
MINUTES, A
KNOCK COMES
TO THE DOOR
OF A CERTAIN
CLUTTERED
SEVENTH-FLOOR
OFFICE...

WHY,
CLARK KENT!
WHAT BRINGS
YOU TO THE
DAILY
PLANET'S
MORGUE?

BUSINESS,
RYAN!
I NEED SOME
INFORMATION
FOR A TV-
SPECIAL I'M
DOING ABOUT
THE EXPLORER,
BURT
KENNYCUT!

WHATEVER'S
BEEN WRITTEN
ABOUT HIM,
RYAN LOWELL
WILL HAVE
ON FILE!

I'VE NEVER
CHECKED TO
SEE IF THERE'S
ANYTHING ON
FILE ABOUT
CLARK KENT!
I WONDER...?

BUT AS THE REPORTER TRAINS HIS X-RAY VISION ON THE FILE UNDER HIS OWN NAME...

HERE'S THE KENNYCUT FILE--

MORE THAN THAT... CONSIDERING WHAT I SEE WRITTEN ABOUT ME IN THAT FILE!

CLARK!--IS THERE SOMETHING WRONG?

NO--I'M FINE, RYAN... THANKS!

THAT FILE ON CLARK KENT SPELLS TROUBLE FOR MY SECRET IDENTITY!

SOMEONE WHO KNOWS ABOUT MY ALTER EGO IS PULLING AN IRRESPONSIBLE PRANK ON ME... AND TRACKING THAT PERSON DOWN--

--IS A JOB FOR SUPERMAN!

OVER THE NEXT FEW HOURS THE MAN OF TOMORROW TRACKS DOWN EVERYONE WHO KNOWS OF HIS DOUBLE IDENTITY...

YOU SAY, COUSIN, THE FILE HOLDS AN OBITUARY FOR CLARK KENT--IN KRYPTONESE LANGUAGE--?

--WHICH INCLUDES MY ENTIRE LIFE HISTORY, SUPERGIRL!

I THOUGHT YOU MAY HAVE PICKED UP SOME CLUE AS TO WHO PUT THE FILE THERE, BATMAN!

IT'S A MYSTERY TO ME, SUPERMAN-- BUT I'LL LET YOU KNOW IF SOMETHING TURNS UP!

...STARTING WITH YOUR BIRTH ON KRYPTON...?

...AND DETAILING EVERY EVENT IN MY "DOUBLE" LIFE UP TO THE PRESENT, FLASH!

LOOK, SUPES... WHY DON'T YOU FORGET THIS SUPER-HERO BUSINESS AND JUST BECOME A REPORTER... OR SOMETHING?

LOTTA HELP YOU ARE, GREEN LANTERN!

SATISFIED THAT NONE OF HIS FRIENDS HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH HIS OBITUARY FILE, SUPERMAN GOES NEXT DAY TO HIS ARCTIC FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE...

AS CLARK, I COULDN'T REMOVE THE FILE WITHOUT RYAN LOWELL GETTING SUSPICIOUS...

...BUT WHAT SPOOKS ME IS THAT THE FILE WAS SO UP-TO-DATE --BUT NOT INCLUDING MY EXCAVATION OF THAT JEWELLED CITY, WHICH NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT YET!

IT'S ALMOST AS IF I'D WRITTEN THE FILE MYSELF!

WELL, "WRITING" IN MY DIARY HAS ALWAYS HELPED ME GET PUZZLING MATTERS STRAIGHT!

AS IDEAS FLOW ELECTRONICALLY FROM HIS MIND THROUGH HIS FINGERTIPS...

...KRYPTONESE WORDS ETCH THEMSELVES ONTO THE PAGES OF SUPERMAN'S DIARY--

HMM... I SAID IT'S AS IF I WERE WRITING THE OBITUARY MYSELF! COULD THAT BE THE ANSWER...?

AT THAT MOMENT, IN A LITTLE OFFICE IN METROPOLIS...

AHH! ANOTHER MESSAGE COMING OVER THE TICKER IN KRYPTONESE!

EVERY TIME THIS HAPPENS, I CAN'T GET OVER THE WONDER OF IT!

SOMEHOW MY TICKER IS ELECTRONICALLY LINKED TO SUPERMAN'S DIARY--

GREAT SCOTT! THIS MAY BE THE MOST AMAZING STORY I'VE SEEN SINCE I CRACKED THE KRYPTONIAN LANGUAGE CODE!

DAREDEVIL STUNTS- WILD ACTION!

WHIN!

TIP
TURBO
TOWER OF POWER™

Kenner & General Mills

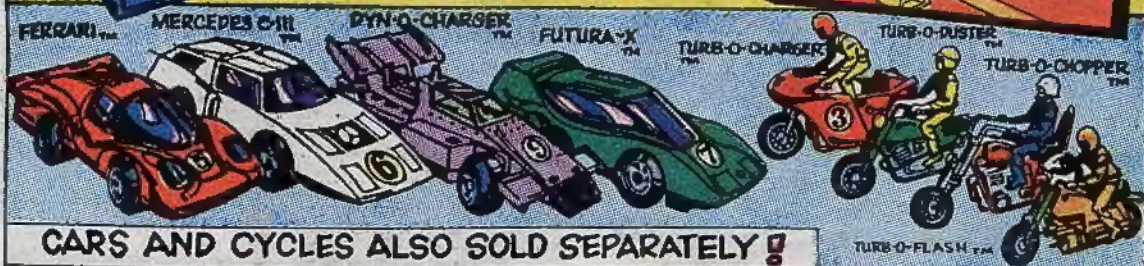
CORNERS ON TWO WHEELS, LIKE THE PROS!

WILD WHEELIES!

PUMP THE TOWER-HEAR THE JET-LIKE WHINE!
AS AIR JET SPINS GYRO-POWER...
WHEEL FASTER AND FASTER...
THE POWER IS IN THE TOWER!
NO BATTERIES!

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**GIGANTIC
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"SUPER-
SIZE!"**



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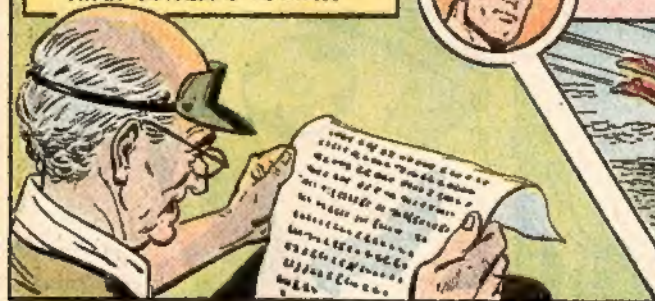
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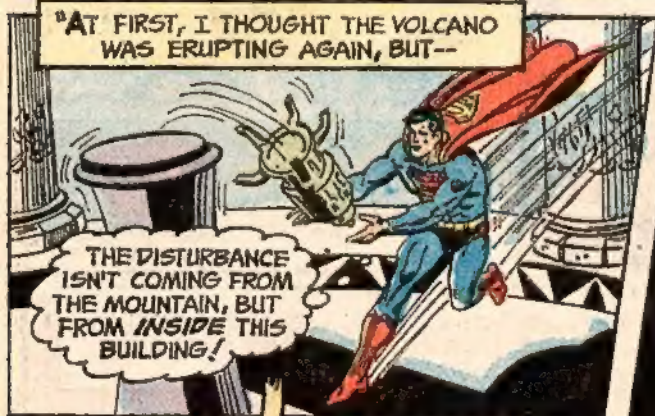
AS THE STORY COMING OVER
THE TICKER UNFOLDS BEFORE
RYAN LOWELL'S EYES...



"MY LATEST ADVENTURE BEGAN WHEN I APPROACHED
THE SUB-VOLCANIC CITY I'M EXCAVATING AND SAW
THE ISLAND QUIVERING..."



"AT FIRST, I THOUGHT THE VOLCANO
WAS ERUPTING AGAIN, BUT--"



THE DISTURBANCE
ISN'T COMING FROM
THE MOUNTAIN, BUT
FROM *INSIDE* THIS
BUILDING!

"AND WHEN
I PEERED
INSIDE..."



IT LOOKS
LIKE... A MAN...
OR A PLANT...
OR BOTH--
COMING OUT
FROM UNDER
THE FLOORING!

WHO CAN
HE BE--?

"THE NEXT
MOMENT, MY
THOUGHT WAS
ANSWERED
BY A
TELEPATHIC
THOUGHT!"

I AM OZYMALIAS--
RULER OF THE
WORLD'S GREATEST
NATION!

...AND I
AM FREE!
--FREE AT
LAST!

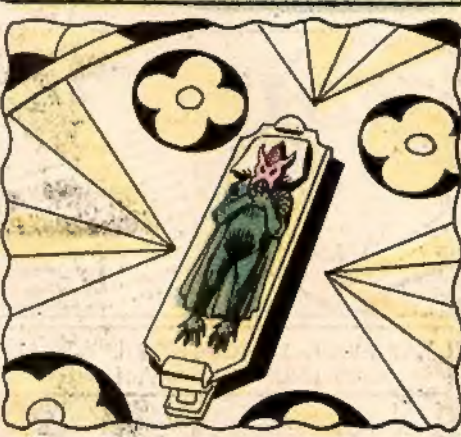
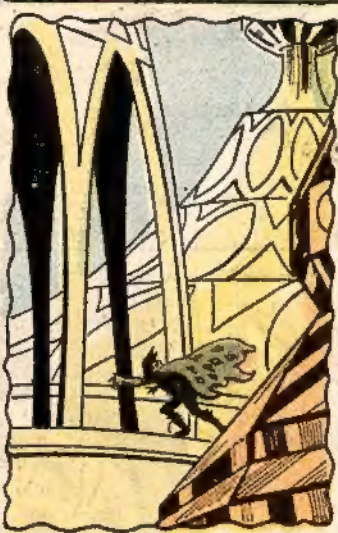


"I STOOD STILL, LISTENING TO HIM TELEPATH HIS STORY! HE CERTAINLY WAS IMPRESSED WITH HIMSELF!...

"AS MY CITY FELL, I FLED HERE TO MY SECRET SANCTUARY TO ESCAPE THE HANDS OF MY ENEMIES...

"AND I PUT MYSELF TO SLEEP UNDER THE FLOORING OF THIS ROTUNDA...

I RULED QUIVUM--THIS BEJEWELED CITY WHOSE EMPIRE STRETCHED ACROSS HALF THE PLANET...
...AND WOULD HAVE EXTENDED TO THE OTHER HALF IF MY FOES HAD NOT DISCOVERED THE IMPLOSION BOMB!



"...TO BE AWAKENED AFTER THE PLANET REVOLVED 144 TIMES AROUND THE SUN--AFTER MORE THAN 52,000 SUNS HAD RISEN OVER THE LIGHT-SENSITIVE SPIRE OF MY TEMPORARY TOMB!"

AND WHO ARE YOU, PUNY CREATURE, TO INVADE MY TOMB AT THE TIME OF MY TRIUMPHANT AWAKENING?
THE WORLD CALLS ME SUPERMAN--AND YOU'LL BE INTERESTED TO KNOW, BIG FELLOW...
...THAT YOU'VE BEEN ASLEEP A LOT LONGER THAN 144 YEARS!

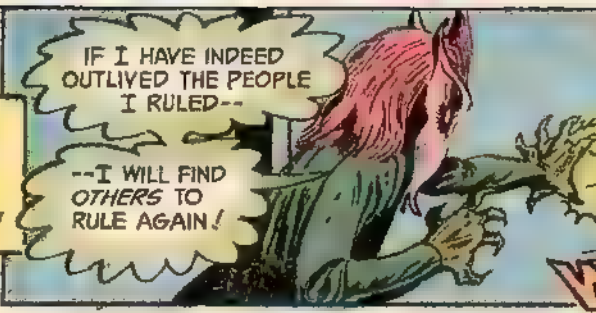
"BEFORE YOU WOKE UP, A VOLCANO'S ERUPTION COVERED YOUR CITY--INCLUDING YOUR LIGHT-SENSITIVE SPIRE...
...SO THE SUNRISE NEVER HIT YOUR TOMB AT ALL!"

YOU ARE A LIAR!
I HAVE NO REASON TO LIE! IT'S THE TRUTH THAT YOU'VE SLEPT HERE UNTOLD EONS...
...LONG ENOUGH FOR THE WORLD TO FORGET BOTH YOU AND YOUR EMPIRE!

"DZYMAYIAS BENT OVER, BREATHING HEAVILY--AS IF GROWING AWARE OF HIS PREDICAMENT...
"HE SEEMED TO BE DRAWING UP SOME INSANE STRENGTH--



"AND THE NEXT THING I KNEW..."



IF I HAVE INDEED OUTLIVED THE PEOPLE I RULED--

--I WILL FIND OTHERS TO RULE AGAIN!



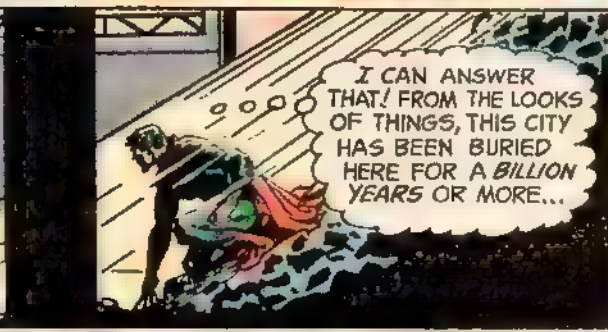
UNNGHH!

WHOMMMPPI!

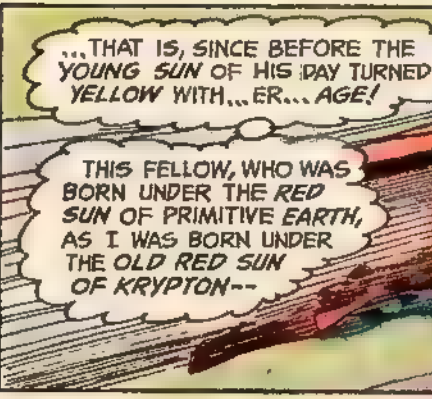


ODD...I WAS NEVER THIS STRONG BEFORE!

HOW DID I GAIN SUCH MIGHTY POWERS--?

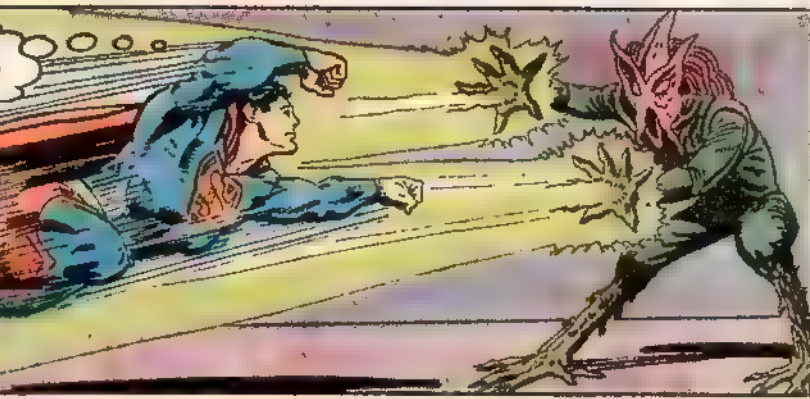


I CAN ANSWER THAT! FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS, THIS CITY HAS BEEN BURIED HERE FOR A BILLION YEARS OR MORE...



...THAT IS, SINCE BEFORE THE YOUNG SUN OF HIS DAY TURNED YELLOW WITH...ER... AGE!

THIS FELLOW, WHO WAS BORN UNDER THE RED SUN OF PRIMITIVE EARTH, AS I WAS BORN UNDER THE OLD RED SUN OF KRYPTON--

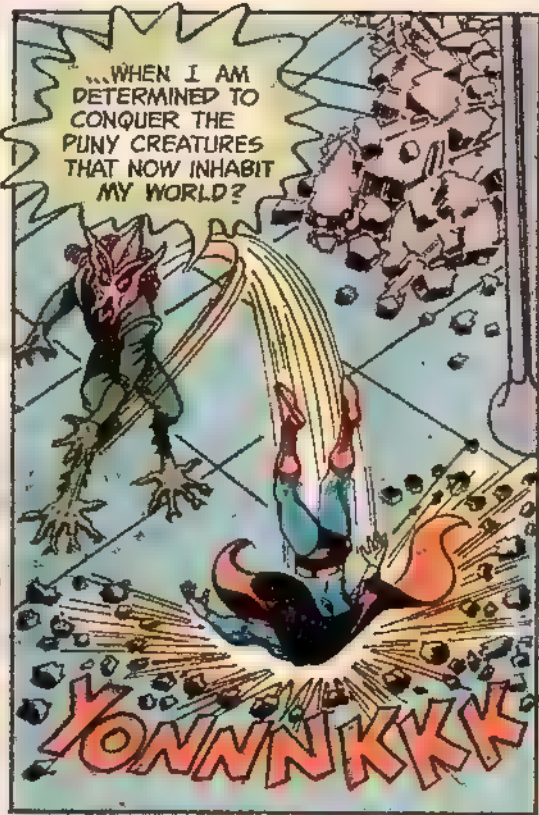




--NOW HAS SUPER-POWERS HE CAN'T YET EVEN IMAGINE!

I'D BEST OVERPOWER HIM BEFORE HE REALIZES HIS FULL STRENGTH!

HA! THINK YOU TO STOP ME NOW...



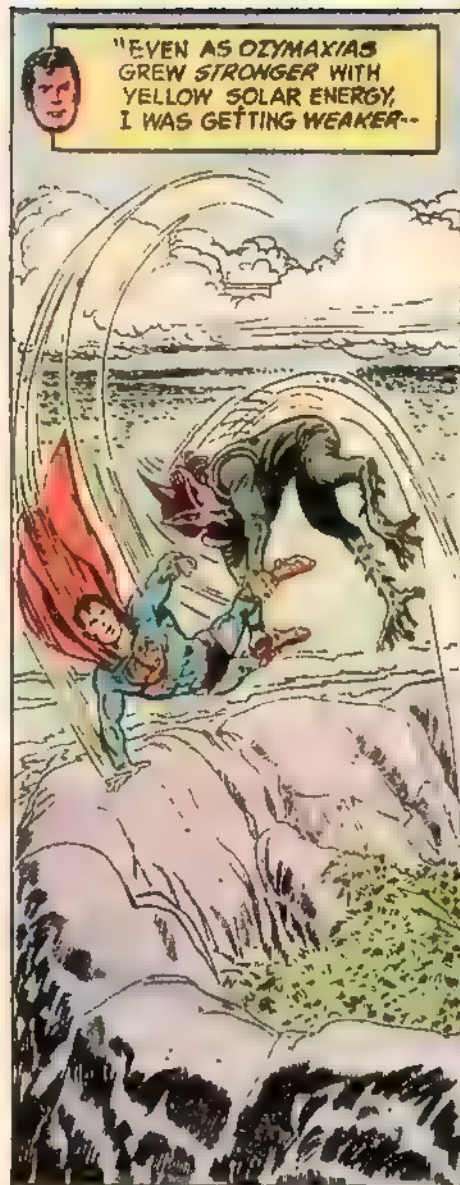
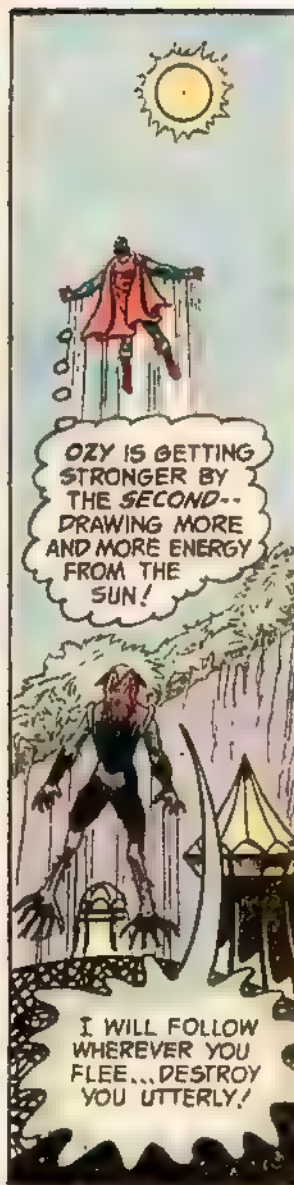
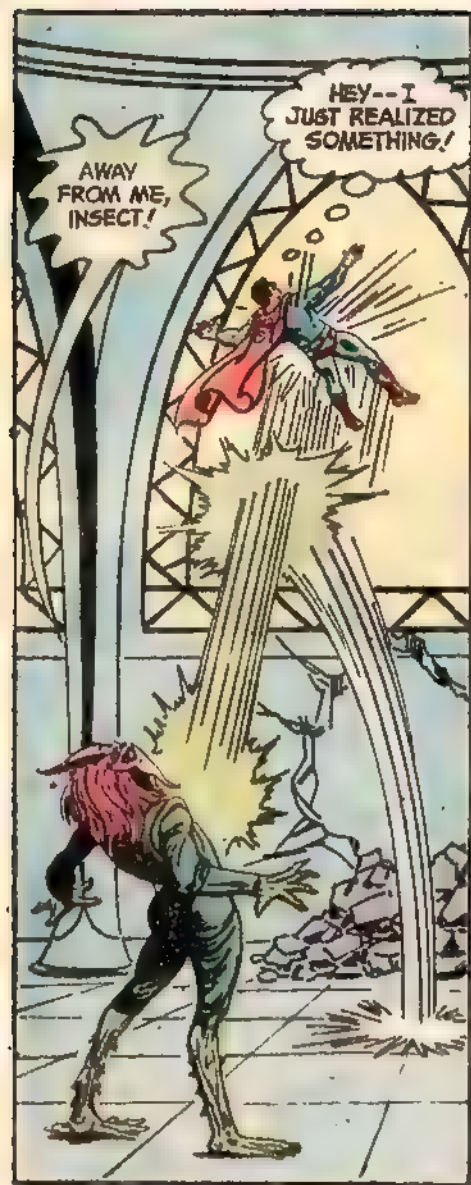
...WHEN I AM DETERMINED TO CONQUER THE PUNY CREATURES THAT NOW INHABIT MY WORLD?

YONNNKKKK



WHEW! WHAT WAS THAT IDLE THOUGHT ABOUT STOPPING OLD OZY BEFORE HE REALIZES HIS FULL STRENGTH?

I MIGHT JUST BE A LITTLE LATE FOR THAT!



IF YOUR FELLOW
CREATURES ARE AS
EASY TO DEFEAT AS
YOU--

UHH?!

I MAY BE
WEAKENED...
BUT I HAVEN'T
FORGOTTEN
MY JUDO!

HE'S MAD--UNABLE TO
ACCEPT HOW THE EARTH
HAS CHANGED OVER
THESE BILLION YEARS...

...AND I CAN
USE HIS MAD
FLAILING TO STALL
HIM OFF WHILE
I THINK OF A
WAY TO OVER-
POWER HIM!

"AS WE CONTINUED TO FIGHT, I REALIZED THAT MY GREENISH
SKIN WAS NOT POISONING ME AS KRYPTONITE ONCE DID..."

"...BUT FROM THE VEGETATION AROUND
HIM--WHICH WAS CONVERTING SUNLIGHT
TO ENERGY BY PHOTOSYNTHESIS!"

"...BUT THAT IT WAS A NEW SENSATION--
MORE LIKE MY STRENGTH WAS FADING
INTO THE VERY EARTH AROUND ME!..."

"IT WAS THEN THAT I REALIZED WHAT WAS
ACTUALLY GOING ON--OZYMALIAS WAS NOT
DRAWING HIS STRENGTH DIRECTLY FROM
THE SUN..."

(CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING)

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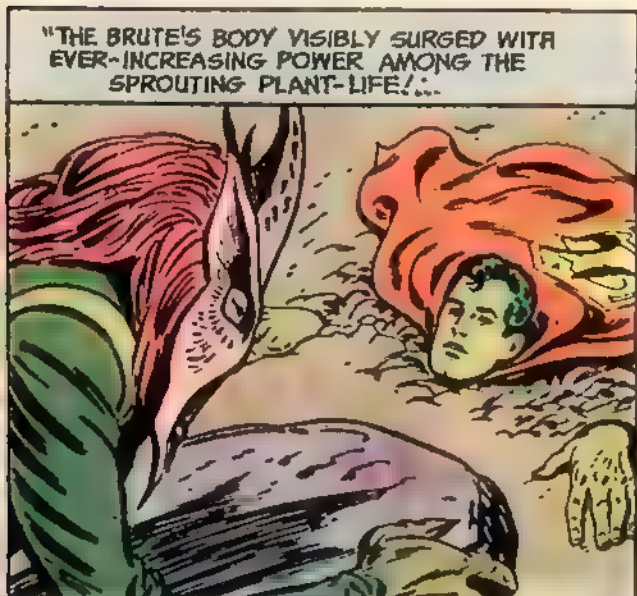
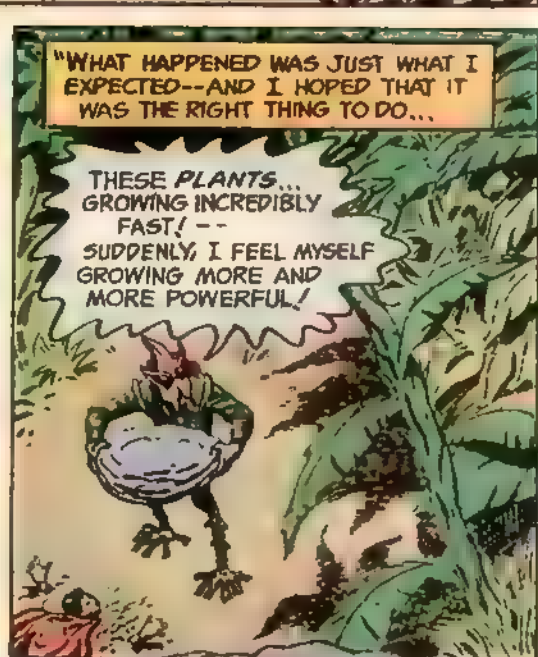
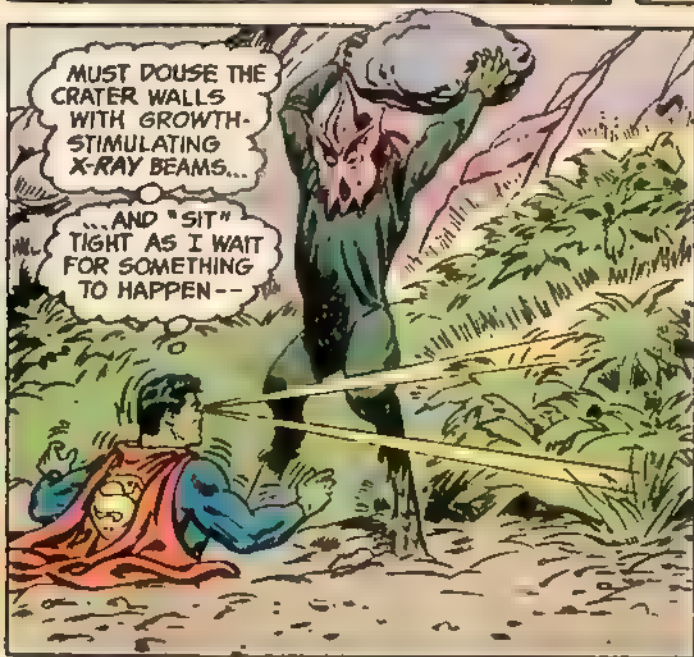
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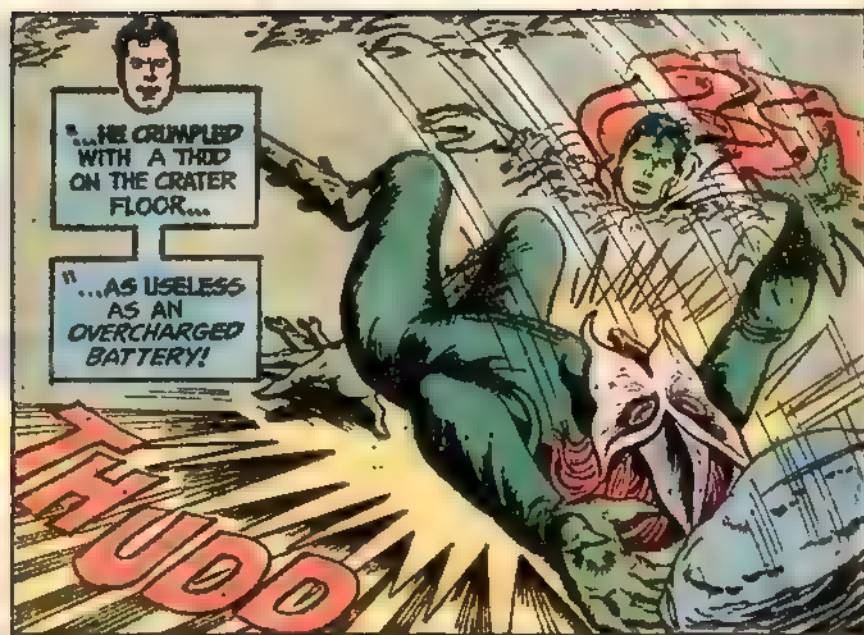
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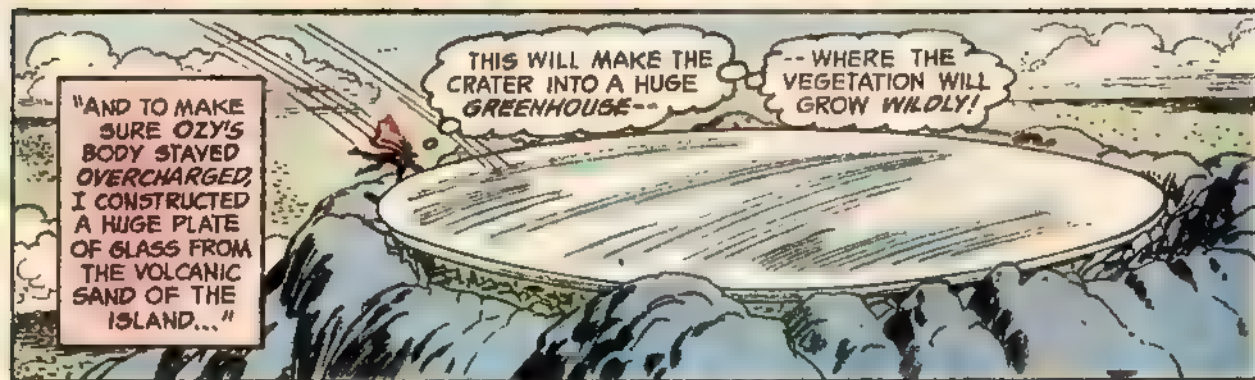
"...HE CRUMPLED
WITH A THUD
ON THE CRATER
FLOOR..."

"...AS USELESS
AS AN
OVERCHARGED
BATTERY!"

"PAINFULLY, AGONIZINGLY,
I DUG MYSELF OUT OF
THE GROUND BESIDE
THE GIANT..."



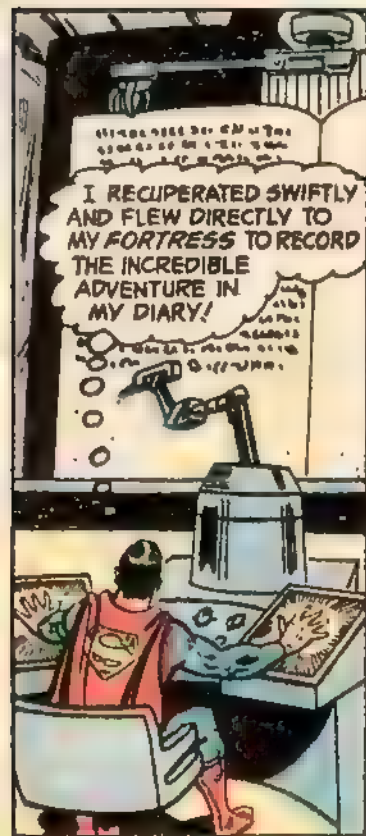
"...WHO ONCE AGAIN
WAS IN SUSPENDED
ANIMATION AS HE HAD
BEEN FOR THE PAST
BILLION-PLUS YEARS!"



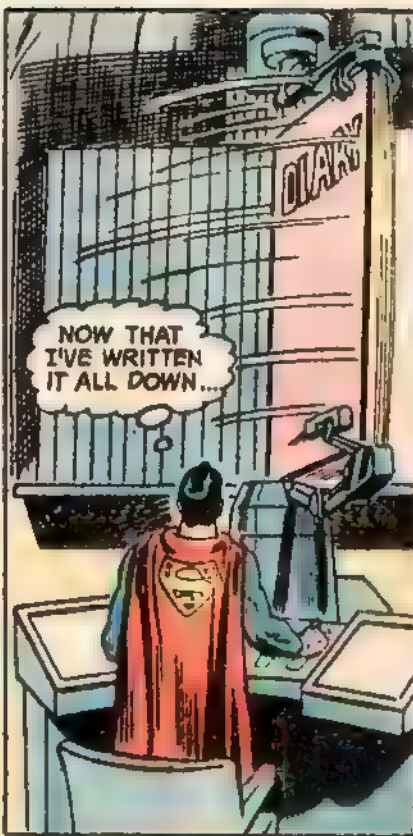
"AND TO MAKE
SURE OZY'S
BODY STAYED
OVERCHARGED
I CONSTRUCTED
A HUGE PLATE
OF GLASS FROM
THE VOLCANIC
SAND OF THE
ISLAND..."

THIS WILL MAKE THE
CRATER INTO A HUGE
GREENHOUSE--

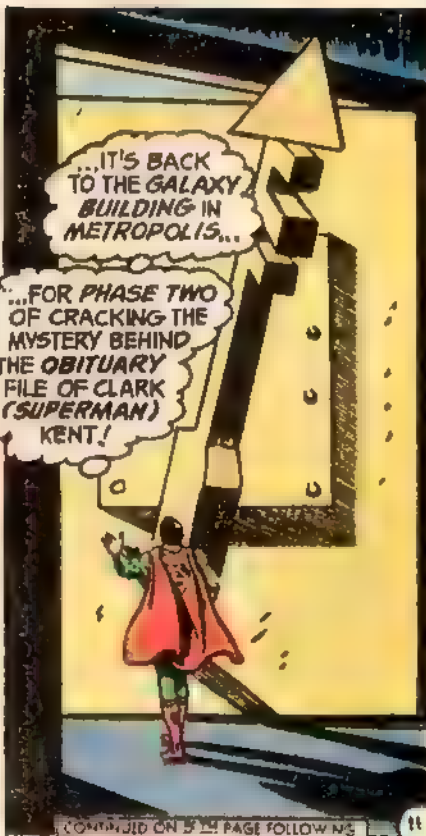
-- WHERE THE
VEGETATION WILL
GROW WILDLY!



I RECUPERATED SWIFTLY
AND FLEW DIRECTLY TO
MY FORTRESS TO RECORD
THE INCREDIBLE
ADVENTURE IN
MY DIARY!



NOW THAT
I'VE WRITTEN
IT ALL DOWN...



...IT'S BACK
TO THE GALAXY
BUILDING IN
METROPOLIS...

...FOR PHASE TWO
OF CRACKING THE
MYSTERY BEHIND
THE OBITUARY
FILE OF CLARK
(SUPERMAN)
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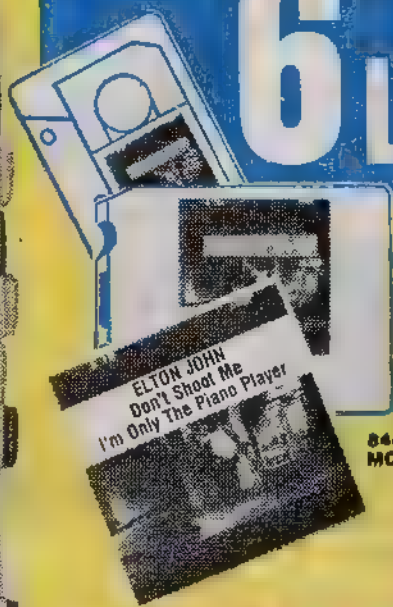
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DIRECT CURRENTS

Sgt. Rock's finally back with Easy Company, but they're all prisoners in a Nazi stalag! Even worse, it's Rock's job to form a firing squad to execute re-captured escapees. Don't miss the explosive story of "The Cage!" . . . coming your way the first week in September in the **December** issue of **OUR ARMY AT WAR** (#263). Battle bonus—a new adventure of the crew of the **USS Stevens**.



When an avid collector pursues his hobby to the heart of Africa, only to find treachery, disaster and death, he can only scream "They Hunt Butterflies, Don't They?" Then again, if he were the hero of the other story in the **December** issue of **HOUSE OF MYSTERY** (#220), he might be after bigger game—the hell-hound Cerebrus perhaps, or maybe even the devil himself! Learn the fate of "The Hunter" in a new Alex Nino story . . . on sale the first week in September.

The **Phantom Stranger** isn't very good at making friends, but when he makes enemies, they're enemies for life (or maybe death). His latest (and greatest) foe is back, complete with a terrifying new weapon—"The Devil Dolls Of Doctor Zorn" in the **January** issue of **THE PHANTOM STRANGER** (#28) . . . on sale the first week in September. The sinister **Spawn Of Frankenstein** will be there too, so don't try to escape buying this issue!



We're not finished with the armed forces yet . . . there's also the true story of "The Ghost and General Ike" headlining the **December** issue of **GHOSTS** (#21) . . . on sale the first week in September. The other supernatural-shockers tell the stories of "The Ghost In The Devil's Chair" and "The Shadow of Death" . . . not to mention the startling secret that "Within You Dwells A Demon!"



Welcome to the world of industrial espionage, where no company's secrets remain secret for long. **Batman** and **Wildcat** must invade this very special business to find "A Very Special Spy" in the **January** issue of **BRAVE & BOLD** (#110) sneaking its way to your newsstand the first week in September from the titanic team of Bob Haney and Jim Aparo!

There's only super escape artist in comics, and that's the one and only **MISTER MIRACLE** . . . but if he doesn't watch out, his new assistant Shilo Norman may give him a lot of competition. For the latest adventures of Scott Free, Big Barda, and the rest of their traveling troupe, tune in the **January** issue (#17) of **MISTER MIRACLE** . . . on sale the first week in September.



Men on Paradise Island? The very thought defies Aphrodite's law, but it might happen if the invaders overcome the Amazons in "The Attack Of The Sky Demons." Then the Amazon Princess, **Wonder Woman**, is off for a sensational struggle in space when she seeks "The Planet Of Plunder!" Both stories of the original, Golden Age **WONDER WOMAN** are coming in the **January** issue (#209) of **W.W.'s** magazine . . . on sale the first week in September.

Take heart . . . you may have to go back to school this month, but DC's putting out such a blockbuster line of magazines in September that you won't even notice! If this week's line-up were not enough, just wait for next week when we unleash one hundred pages of the greatest Golden Age characters of all—The **SHAZAM** family! They'll all be there, the **Big Red Cheese**, **Capt. Marvel Jr.**, **Mary Marvel**, **Sivana**, even **Mr. Tawny** . . . be sure to join them.

AS THE
MAN OF
STEEL
BLASTS
OFF FROM
HIS ARCTIC
FORTRESS...

I SUSPECT THAT
THE DIARY IS THE
LINK TO THE
MYSTERY BEHIND
CLARK KENT'S
OBITUARY...

...SO IT'S RUSH BACK TO
METROPOLIS TO CATCH
MY DIARY-SNOOPER
RED-HANDED!

WGBS

GREAT KRYPTON!

MY SUPER-VISION
SHOWS THE STORY
IS ALREADY IN THE
FILE!

NOW I'M SURE WHO
THE CULPRIT IS--AND
SUPER-VENTRILOQUISM
WILL PROVE IT!

AT THAT MOMENT, THE MORGUE-KEEPER
IS INTERRUPTED BY AN ALARMING
SCREAM FROM THE DIRECTION OF
THE HALL...

WHAT--?

GOOD GRIEF!
SOMEONE YELLED
THAT THERE IS A
FIRE IN THE
BUILDING--!

NO NEED TO RUN
OFF, RYAN...
THERE IS NO
FIRE!

I YELLED "FIRE"... WITH
SUPER-VENTRILOQUISM!

BUT WHY
DID YOU DO A
THING LIKE
THAT?

TO PROVE
A POINT!

YOU SEE,
I YELLED
"FIRE" IN MY
NATIVE
LANGUAGE,
KRYPTONESE...

...AND YOUR
INSTINCTIVE
REACTION
PROVED THAT
YOU UNDERSTOOD
THE LANGUAGE!

WHAT
I WANT
TO KNOW
IS--

HOW
AND
WHY!

AS RYAN LOWELL EXPLAINS THE WHOLE STORY BEHIND THE CLARK KENT OBITUARY FILE AND THE ODD TICKER-TAPE MACHINE....

...AND WHEN YOU FOUND THAT YOUR MACHINE WAS LINKED TO MY DIARY THROUGH AN ELECTRONIC FLUKE, YOU MANAGED TO DECODE THE *KRYPTONESE* LANGUAGE?--QUITE AN ACCOMPLISHMENT!

NOW, SUPERMAN, I HAVE A COUPLE OF QUESTIONS FOR YOU!

HOW DID YOU KNOW THE STORY OF YOUR LATEST ADVENTURE CAME FROM THE DIARY?

NO WAY, RYAN-- NO WAY AT ALL!

COULDN'T SOMEONE HAVE SEEN AND REPORTED IT?

YOU SEE, WHAT I JUST WROTE IN MY DIARY WAS ONLY AN IMAGINARY STORY!

Y-YOU MEAN THERE NEVER WAS AN OZYMALIAS EXCEPT IN YOUR IMAGINATION?

WHEW! YOU'RE A NATURAL STORY-TELLER, SUPERMAN!

NOW, RYAN LOWELL-- WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST I DO ABOUT THE FACT THAT YOU KNOW MY SECRET IDENTITY?

WHY DO ANYTHING? AFTER ALL, I'VE KNOWN IT FOR A LONG TIME!

BESIDES, THE WAY THE OBITUARY ON CLARK IS WRITTEN, ONLY HISTORY WILL SHARE THE SECRET!

AFTER ALL, A GOOD REPORTER DOESN'T TELL PRIVILEGED INFORMATION FOR ANY REASON... RIGHT, CLARK KENT?

RIGHT! IF I CAN'T TRUST A FELLOW JOURNALIST, WHO CAN I TRUST?

**COMING
SUPER-ATTRACTIONS!**

IN THE DEC.

SUPERMAN
#270

THE SENSATIONAL RETURN OF
"THE VIKING FROM VALHALLA!"

PLUS A PRIVATE LIFE OF
CLARK KENT STORY!

(ON SALE THE 2ND WEEK
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☆☆☆

IN THE DEC.

ACTION #430
COMICS

SUPERMAN TAKES A
"BUS RIDE TO NOWHERE!"
AND AN ACTION-PLUS STORY:
"UP POPS THE ATOM!"

(ON SALE THE LAST WEEK
IN SEPTEMBER)

THE END

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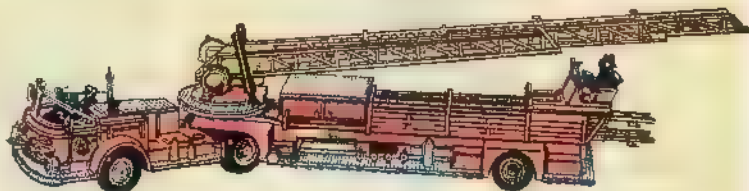
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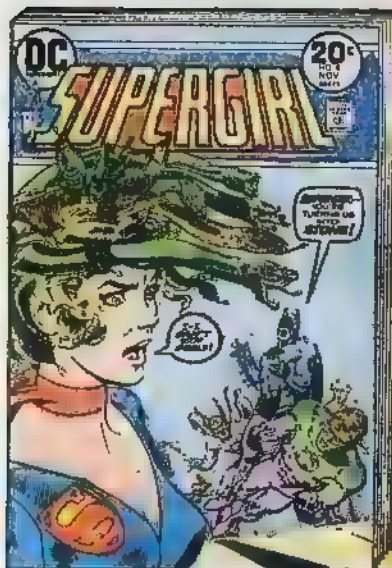
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- 80 ☐ FROM BEYOND THE UNKNOWN
- 81 ☐ STRANGE ADVENTURES



SUPERGIRL... MIGHTY AND BEAUTIFUL HEROINE!

**BUT NOW ANY MAN WHO
 LOOKS INTO HER EYES
 IS DOOMED...
 THE MAGICAL CURSE
 OF THE MEDUSA,
 WHICH EVEN SHE IS
 POWERLESS AGAINST,
 IS UPON HER IN...**

"A HEADFUL OF SNAKES!"

**IN THE
 NOVEMBER ISSUE!**

DARK: THE RODEO GROUNDS WERE QUIET NOW. THE SPECTATORS HAD LONG SINCE GONE HOME-- AND EVERYTHING WAS FINISHED FOR THE NIGHT...

EVERYTHING, THAT IS, EXCEPT CARLA... AND ME...

WE WERE--ER--OCCUPIED: SHE WITH ME--AND ME WITH NOT SMEARING MY SPECIAL MAKE-UP!

YES, SO FAR, IMPERSONATING RODEO CHAMP RICK RYAN HAD BEEN-- WELL, INTERESTING, TO SAY THE LEAST--

--AND IT WAS ABOUT TO BECOME A GOOD DEAL MORE INTERESTING--

--FOR AS CARLA SNUGGLED AGAINST ME, THE HAIR BEGAN TO BRISTLE AT THE BACK OF MY NECK--

--AND MY SPECIAL "SIXTH SENSE" TOLD ME IT WAS TIME TO--

MOVE, CARLA--
FORE THET
THING PUTS
ITS BRAND
ON YUR!

IT WASN'T HER BRAND, THOUGH, IT WAS MINE-- A BULL'S-EYE-- LIKE THE ONE I'D STOOP ON HERE INSTANTS BEFORE--

--BUT THEN THAT'S THE NAME OF THE GAME WHEN YOU'RE...

CHRISTOPHER CHANCE...

"THE
RODEO RIDDLE
CONTRACT!"

LEN WEIN: writer
DICK GIORDANO: artist
JULIUS SCHWARTZ: editor

The **HUMAN
TARGET**

FOR SEVERAL LONG MOMENTS, I GAZED AT THE SMOLDERING IRON--AND THE SOUND OF STILL-SIZZLING METAL REMINDED ME WHY I WAS HERE...

THE MOTORCYCLE WAS NEW. I'D BEEN PUTTING IT THROUGH ITS PACES ON THE HILLS OUTSIDE BOSTON WHEN RYAN AND I FIRST MET...

MR. CHRISTOPHER CHANCE? I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YUH FER A MINUTE IF I COULD!

GOT A PROBLEM YUH COULD MEBBE HELP ME WITH?

I'D HEARD RYAN'S TYPE OF PROBLEM MANY TIMES BEFORE: SOMEONE WAS TRYING TO KILL HIM! HE DIDN'T KNOW WHO OR WHY--

--BUT IF I TOOK THE CONTRACT, IT WOULD BE MY JOB TO FIND OUT!

I TOOK THE CONTRACT--AND, USING MAKE-UP AND MANNERISMS, I BECAME RICK RYAN...

MY REVERIE WAS INTERRUPTED BY THE CLAMOR OF APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS--AND AS I TURNED TO COMFORT THE STILL-SHAKEN CARLA...

IT'S ALL RIGHT, HONEY-- JUST CALM DOWN NOW--!

RICK... CARLA... WE HEARD THE SCREAM! WHAT'S GOIN' ON HERE?

ANYTHIN' WRONG?

EASY, PEOPLE--NO PROBLEM! JUST A LI'L ACCIDENT IS ALL!

IT'S NUTHIN' TO GIT ALL RILED UP OVER! JUST G'WAN BACK TO WHUT YUH WERE DOIN'! WE'LL BE FINE HERE!

THE CONCERNED CROWD WANDERED AWAY THEN-- AND I WATCHED THE DEPARTURE OF THREE OF ITS MEMBERS MOST CAREFULLY --

CHET HAWKINS: RYAN HAD BEATEN HIM TWO YEARS RUNNING FOR THE TITLE OF WORLD'S CHAMPION COWBOY.

VINCE JASON: HIS FATHER HAD OWNED THIS RODEO UNTIL RYAN WON IT FROM HIM AT POKER...

HARVE KIMBLE: UNTIL RYAN CAME ALONG, CARLA HAD BEEN HIS GIRL...

ALL THREE HAD MOTIVE ENOUGH TO KILL RYAN-- BUT WHICH ONE HAD NERVE ENOUGH AS WELL?

I STILL DIDN'T KNOW THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON, AS I CAME OUT OF THE CHUTE FOR THE SADDLE-BRONC-RIDING EVENT...

CYCLONE'S A MEAN LITTLE LADY! GOT TO HOLD MY WEIGHT BALANCED-- RIDE WITH HER BUCKING MOTION--

FOR A NOVICE WITH LITTLE PRACTICE, I WAS DOING PRETTY WELL...

I STUCK TO THAT SADDLE LIKE I WAS NAILED TO IT...

THERE WAS NO WAY CYCLONE COULD THROW ME WITHOUT THROWING THE SADDLE AS WELL--

--WHICH IS PRECISELY WHAT SHE DID!...

HUH? CINCH-STRAP BROKE!

GOT TO LAND JUST RIGHT--OR I'M LIABLE TO BREAK MY NECK!

NNEEEHH

I HIT SHOULDERS FIRST, THE OUTWARD MOTION OF MY HANDS BREAKING THE IMPACT OF MY FALL...BUT I WASN'T OUT OF DANGER YET--

--FOR, THOUGH MY UN-EXPECTED SPAL HADN'T BROKEN MY NECK--

--IT WAS AN OVERSIGHT CYCLONE WAS DETERMINED TO CORRECT!...

IF THOSE HOOFES HIT ME, I'VE HAD IT!

GOTTA MOVE--NOW!

MUSCLES BUNCHING, I SNAPPED MY BODY BACKWARD, FLIPPING OUT OF CYCLONE'S PATH BEFORE SHE COULD PERMANENTLY PART MY HAIR--

CLUDD!

--AND IT WASN'T TILL
WE GOT BACK TO THE
STABLES THAT I
DISCOVERED ..

THIS WAS **NO** ACCIDENT!
THAT CINCH-STRAP DIDN'T **SNAP**...

...IT WAS
CUT ALMOST
CLEAN
THROUGH!

RICK--
NO! HOW
DREADFUL!

YEAH, RYAN--
THAT'S REALLY
A SHAME!

TOO
BAD,
RICK!

YEAH--
RIGHT!
ANY
IDEA
WHO
DID
IT?

C'MON--
WHO
ARE
YUH
KIDDIN'?

YOU
DID
IT!

I HADN'T REALLY KNOWN
WHICH OF THEM I WAS
POINTING THAT ACCUSING
FINGER AT--

--BUT MY LITTLE RUSE
WORKED--IN **SPADES!**

DON'T
KNOW HOW
YA FOUND
ME **OUT**,
RYAN--

--BUT YA **AIN'T**
TAKIN' ME **IN!**

IT STARTED
TO DIVE FORWARD
EVEN AS
KIMBLE THREW
BUT EVEN SO,
THE PITCHFORK
MISSED ME BY
FRACTIONS OF
AN INCH--



--BUT THE MOMENTARY DISTRACTION
WAS ALL HARVE KIMBLE NEEDED--
TO MAKE A **BREAK** FOR FREEDOM ...

OUTA MY WAY,
YOU IDIOTS!
AIN'T NOBODY
HOLDING ME
HERE NOW!

HARVE--
COME **BACK!**
YOU HAVEN'T
GOT A
PRAYER!



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BUT IT SEEMED KIMBLE **WASN'T** A PRAYING MAN. HE SLAMMED THE DOOR **LOCKED** BEHIND HIM ON HIS WAY OUT...

BY THE TIME THEY BREAK OPEN THAT DOOR, KIMBLE WILL 'BE GONE!

HE HAS TOO MUCH OF A HEADSTART-- UNLESS...

IT WAS IRONIC IN A WAY, I SUPPOSE.

THE HORSE LEFT BEHIND, SADDLED AND WAITING, WAS KIMBLE'S--

--AND WHEN VINCE AND CHET AT LAST BURST DOWN THE DOOR, I CAME OUT OF THE CHUTE LIKE A RODEO PRO!...

HEY, RICK-- WHAT IN BLUE BLAZES--?

THERE IS A RODEO EVENT CALLED **BULL-DOGGING**--

--IN WHICH THE RIDER CHASES DOWN A RUNAWAY CALF--

--LASSOES IT--

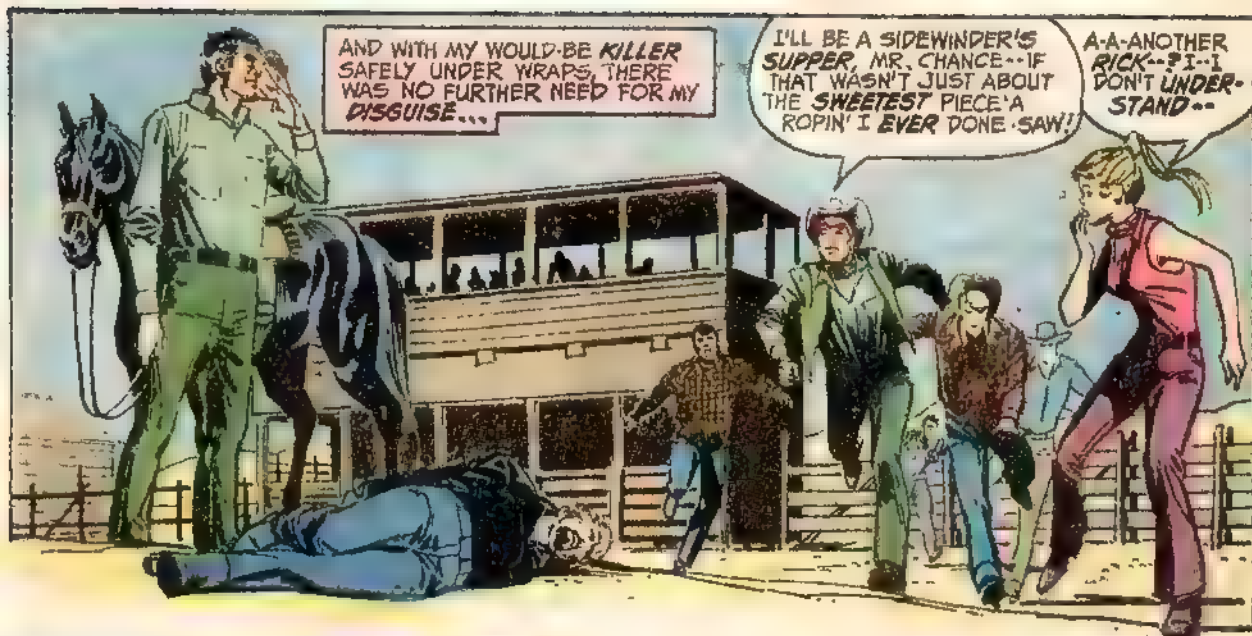
--DISMOUNTS--

--WRESTLES THE STEER TO THE GROUND--

-- THEN **HOGTIES** THREE OF ITS FOUR LIMBS--

- ALL WHILE RACING AGAINST THE CLOCK!

I MUST HAVE SET A **NEW** WORLD'S RECORD THAT AFTER-NOON!



AND WITH MY WOULD-BE KILLER SAFELY UNDER WRAPS, THERE WAS NO FURTHER NEED FOR MY DISGUISE...

I'LL BE A SIDEWINDER'S SUPPER, MR. CHANCE--IF THAT WASN'T JUST ABOUT THE SWEETEST PIECE 'A ROPIN' I EVER DONE 'SAW!

A-A-ANOTHER RICK--? I-I DON'T UNDERSTAND--

THEN, IN CLASSIC MOVIE DETECTIVE FASHION, I GATHERED EVERYONE TOGETHER TO EXPLAIN...

APPARENTLY, KIMBLE'S MOTIVE WAS JEALOUSY! HE MUST HAVE BEEN SEETHING WITH IT SINCE YOU AND CARLA BECAME ENGAGED, RYAN!

IT SEEMS HE TRIED TO KILL YOU--BEFORE THE WEDDING COULD TAKE PLACE!

B-BUT HE WASN'T SUPPOSED TO REALLY KILL YOU, RICK! THAT WASN'T PART OF THE PLAN AT--

OOOOHHH!

PLAN? CARLA, HONEY-- YUH DON'T MEAN THAT YOU--?

I-I ONLY WANTED VINCE TO SCARE YOU, DARLING--MAKE YOU REALIZE HOW PRECIOUS OUR TIME TOGETHER IS!

I MEAN--WHEN YOU JUST KEPT PUTTING OUR WEDDING OFF --AND OFF--I WAS AFRAID--

--I'D NEVER MARRY YOU? OH, CARLA, HONEY--PLEASE--!

I'LL MARRY YUH! OF COURSE I'LL MARRY YUH--TOMORROW, IF YUH WANT!

TOMORROW? WHAT ABOUT TODAY?

TODAY, IT IS, THEN--SOON'S WE KIN FIND US SOME WITNESSES!

WITNESSES? OH, YOU WILL BE A WITNESS, WON'T YOU, MR. CHANCE? WE--WE OWE YOU SO MUCH--!

WELL--I SUPPOSE--I--

IT WAS A LOVELY WEDDING.

--THE HAPPY ENDING--

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE DURING THE LAST WEEK IN SEPTEMBER



Dear Editor,

I didn't think it was possible, but you did it! In *Action* #425 you fitted three top-notch tales into only 23 pages!

Concerning the artistic change on the *Superman* feature ("The Last Moa on Earth"), if that's the price we fans have to pay in order to see Murphy Anderson's fantastic pencils grace other features, then I'm all for it. (In other words, Frank Giacoia is an excellent replacement for Murphy as *Superman's* inker.)

I see you're planning a *Green Arrow* story for next month. I hope that you'll remember that GA has come into millions again (*Brave & Bold* #106). For him to still pursue his job as a public relations man is perfectly feasible (and still a good idea), but now (imagine), he'll have carfare to travel across town! Seriously, I think he should have the money, but not use it except in an emergency.

Michael Akerman, Bronx, N.Y.

(As far as we're concerned, any one of three things could have happened. (1) Oliver lost the money. (2) The will was contested and Ollie lost. Or (3) the whole story was imaginary. Anyway, Mr. Queen is still as broke as most New Year's resolutions!—E.N.B.)



Dear Editor:

I am beginning to like the *Human Target*. No, let me correct that statement: I love the *Human Target*! I kiss his boots! I worship his every strand of graying hair! I even admire his favorite pipe (which is quite an achievement, because I'm not exactly attracted to pipes)!

What has brought about this dramatic change in an "I-don't-exactly-like-the-*Human-Target*" reader? The magic name is Neal Adams! In my last letter, I explained that *Green Arrow* was much better than *Christopher Chance*. I had it straight in my mind; no one could alter my thoughts about the matter. But for some reason, today I read *Action* #425 and everything changed for me, like a terrific blast from an A-bomb. *Chris Chance* altered my wave-lengths of hero-liking with the help of master artist Neal Adams.

Now the radiation from the explosion is compelling me to radiate to you how the Adams-Giordano team seems so right on the *Human Target*. And how the first half of "The Short-Walk-to-Disaster Contract" was so interesting that I have to buy the second half to see *Chris* not get killed by the *Great Antonio*. (Thank you, Mr. Wein.)

Well, besides kissing *Chris's* boots, I should mention a few other boots that need to be kissed.

The *Atom* story was a blast, not a bomb, and I hope *Jean* and *Ray* will get closer together in the future (like maybe married soon), because I think married couples are sweet.

I was a little disappointed when I read "The Last Moa!" I expected the team of "Swanderson," but I'm not really complaining. Frank Giacoia's a pretty good inker;

and Cary Bates' *Superman* saga about the weird moa bird didn't sag.

Well, will you please excuse me now? And could you pass another of *Chris's* boots if it's within reach? Thanks . . . Smack! . . . missed a spot . . .

Debbie Hetherington, Wallaceburg, Ont.

(Rats! With all those lip-marks, *Chris* will have to get 'em shined again!—E.N.B.)



Dear Editor:

The cover for *Action* #425, showing some kids reading a copy of *Action*, with a little kid in a *Superman* sweatshirt pointing to the real guy against a drab yellow sky, was reminiscent, in its absurdity and total irrelevance to the story, of something out of the '40's. Whatever deserves to be revived from then, this kind of cover is not it. On *Shazam*, maybe, but not on *Action*!

Inside, I find another regression—to three stories instead of two. Even three stories of equal length have to be rather short and to the point; and if you follow the tradition of the variety mag and give the lead character more than his share of the available space, neither of the filler stories can have much of a plot at all!

Just look at the fillers this issue. "13 Old Men Who Run The World" was the better and more successful of the two. But the story was rushed, particularly the part dealing with the "old men" of the title. Even if they were fictitious, I would have liked to know a little more about them and their motivations!

In "The Short-Walk-to-Disaster Contract," Neal Adams, in his first appearance in months, tried another old space-saving gimmick—seven or eight panels on a page. In this, he was successful—Adams is really good at layouts! But even so, there wasn't room for much of a plot, and the story had to be continued.

As for the *Superman* lead, "The Last Moa on Earth," it proved once again that *Superman* doesn't need 14 pages in every story. The only real trouble with this tale was that it strayed too far toward the improbable. This is *Superman* we're dealing with, not *Captain Marvel*, and he's basically a "straight" hero. We've got to be able to suspend our disbelief—and try to tone down the humor a little more.

Richard H. Morrissey, Framingham, Mass.

(Well, Rich, it's obvious you aren't kissing any boots. In fact, after reading your letter, we feel like we've received a boot in the mouth!—E.N.B.)

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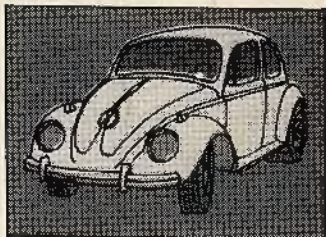
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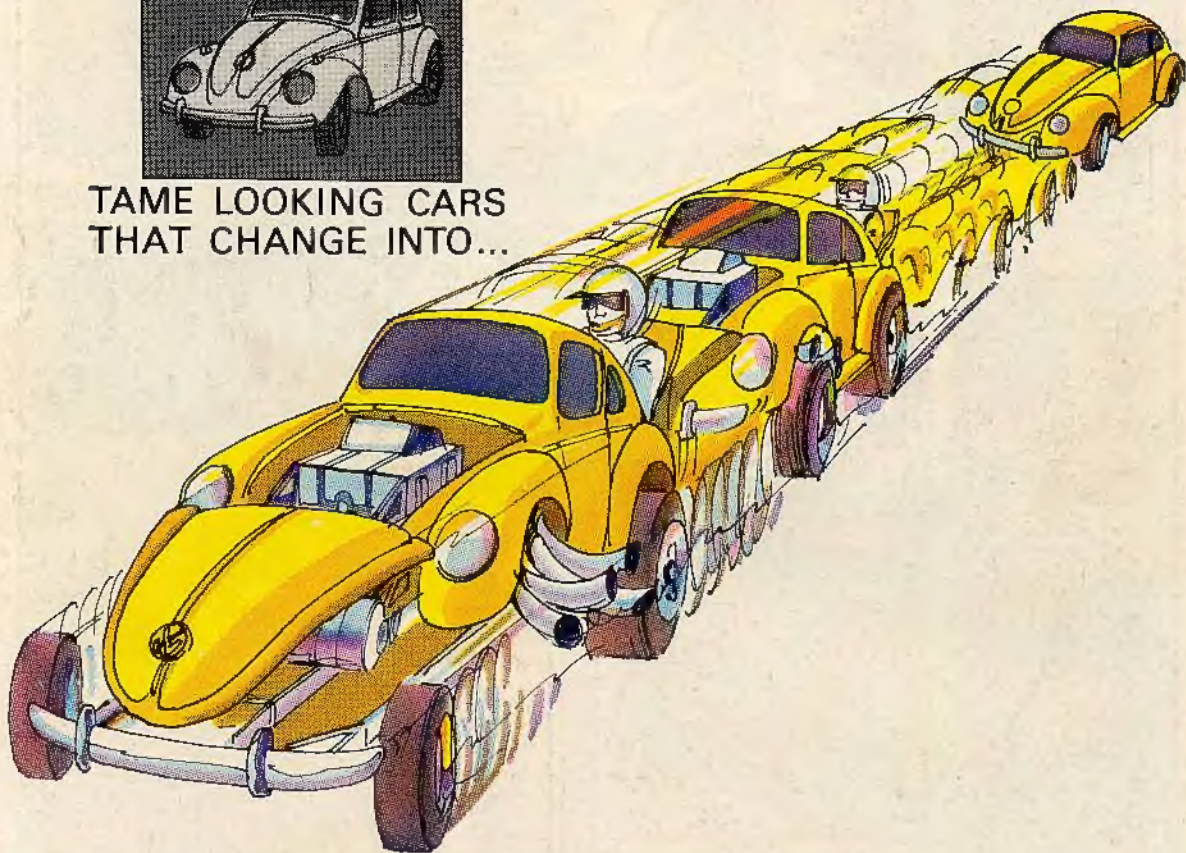
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